

## **Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation: The National Survey of Residential Care Facilities (NSCRF)**

*The National Survey of Residential Care Facilities (NSCRF) will fill a gap in federal long-term care data collection and provide nationally representative data on residential care facilities and their residents.*

### **Lead Agency:**

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

### **Agency Mission:**

The Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation advises the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services on policy development in health, disability and aging, human services, and science and data policy, and provides advice and analysis on economic policy. The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (OASPE) leads special initiatives, coordinates the Department's evaluation, research and demonstration activities, and manages cross-Department planning activities such as strategic planning, legislative planning and review of regulations. Integral to this role, OASPE conducts research and evaluation studies, develops policy analyses, and estimates the cost and benefits of policy alternatives under consideration by the Department or Congress.

### **Principal Investigator:**

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### **Partner Agencies:**

National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)  
Agency for Health Research and Quality (AHRQ)  
CDC National Center for Chronic Care and Disease Prevention and Health Promotion--  
Division of Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention  
Veterans' Administration (VA)

### **General Description:**

Unlike nursing homes and home and hospice care, the federal government does not currently collect data on residential care. Without this data it is impossible to understand

the entire spectrum of long-term care options. States are responsible regulating residential care and state policies, licensure requirements, and terminology vary widely across states. This makes accurate national estimates of facility services and the total number of residents challenging.

To address this issue the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) with the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is conducting a National Survey of Residential Care Facilities (NSRCF). This will be the first nationally representative sample survey of residential care in the United States. The survey will determine the *characteristics of residential care facilities*, such as their structure and environment, types of services offered, the staff they employ, and the requirements for admission, retention, and discharge. Additionally the survey will determine the *characteristics of residents* living in residential care settings, such as demographics, levels of functional disability and cognitive impairment, service needs, and the types of services used.

A general shift in state Medicaid long-term care policy toward community-based care over the past 25 years, and independent growth in private-pay residential care (e.g., assisted living) since the late 1980s have led to a burgeoning, yet still not clearly delineated, set of residential care alternatives to home care and traditional skilled nursing facilities. Residential care facilities, such as assisted living facilities or board and care homes, are a critical component of long-term care systems, serving individuals who cannot live at home without assistance, but who do not require the level of skilled nursing care found in nursing homes.

Collecting information on residential care is critical because it is impossible to understand the changing dynamics of publicly financed long-term care (i.e., Medicare home health, Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS), and nursing home care) without a complete picture of the entire spectrum of residential care options available to persons with disabilities. Without an accurate source of information on the characteristics of all residential care facilities, the services they provide, and their residents, policymakers and providers will be unable to fully understand the current long-term care system and the likely impact of policy changes.

This essential national study will help policymakers have a more complete picture of the long term care spectrum and of the residential care industry and residents. The pretest will be administered in Fall 2008, and the national survey will be fielded in early 2010.